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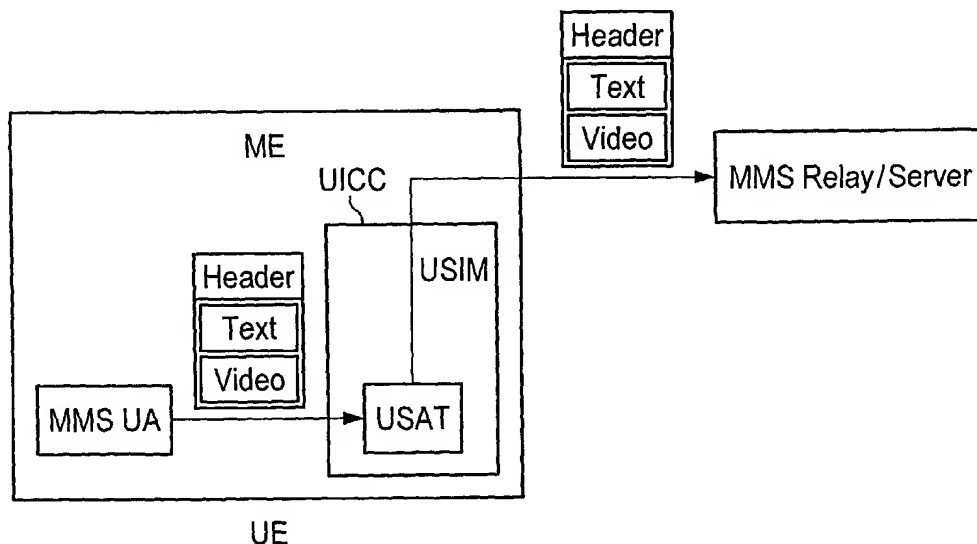
(54)

Methods, devices and software programs for processing and/or evaluating Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) messages

(57) The invention relates to a method for processing and/or evaluating MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service)-related messages (Multimedia Messages (MMs), parts of MMs, delivery reports, read-reply reports, MMS notifications, etc. on a device or device ensemble adapted to participate in mobile telecommunication (Mobile Station (MS); User Equipment (UE); Mobile Equipment (ME); laptop, notebook, organizer, PC, etc. connected to a MS, UE, etc.), said device or device ensemble accommodating an MMS User Agent and accommodating or adapted to accommodate at least one

SIM card (Subscriber Identity Module) and/or one UICC (Universal Integrated Circuit Card) with an USIM (UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunication Service)-SIM), wherein said MMS-related messages are terminal originated or terminal terminated. The method is characterized in that said MMS-related messages are processed and/or evaluated by at least one SAT/USAT application (SIM Application Toolkit / USIM Application Toolkit) residing on said SIM card/UICC. The invention also relates to a respective method on network elements, to respective devices and to respective software programs.

FIG 1



Description

[0001] Nowadays, in mobile networks like GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication), SMS (Short message Service) is used to send and receive short messages between mobile terminals. Currently a new messaging service, the so-called MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) is being standardized, see 3GPP TS 23.140 V4.2.0 (Release 4), Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), Functional description, stage 2. On the contrary to SMS, MMS messages can contain multimedia elements like for example text, image, audio or video.

[0002] MMS is a peer-to-peer messaging service between two MMS User Agents which are both connected to an MMS Relay/Server. The User Agent resides either on a mobile phone, e.g. a UMTS-UE (Universal Mobile Telecommunication Service - User Equipment) or a GSM-MS (Mobile Station) or on an external device, e.g. a notebook/laptop, connected to a mobile phone, or even on a PC. The User Agent is an application layer function that provides the user with the ability to view, compose and handle the Multimedia Messages (MMs; the ending 's' is used throughout for plurals), e.g. submitting, receiving, delivery of MMs. The MMS Relay/Server is a network entity responsible for storage and handling of incoming and outgoing messages and for the transfer of the message between different messaging systems.

[0003] Mobile communication services such as the 2nd generation, e.g. GSM, and the 3rd generation, e.g. UMTS, use well-defined smart cards in addition to mobile phones. Plugged into a mobile phone these smart cards enable a user to use the mobile communication service he has subscribed to. Moreover, user preferences and settings as well as user's personal information can be stored on such smart cards.

[0004] In GSM these cards are called SIM (subscriber identity module). In UMTS one distinguishes between the physical card which is called UICC (universal IC card; IC: Integrated Circuit) and its logical functionality, the USIM (UMTS subscriber identity module).

[0005] It is an aim of the current invention to find new and simple ways of handling and processing and/or evaluating MMS-related messages, especially with respect to the needs of operators owning the above mentioned smart cards.

[0006] This aim is solved by the features of the independent claims 1, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21.

[0007] The invention proposes new SAT or USAT mechanisms which enable an operator to write operator-specific mobile phone applications which control and/or make use of MMS functionality residing on a mobile phone. The methods described herein allow the Mobile Equipment (ME) of the Mobile Station or the User Equipment to support SAT or USAT mechanisms for MMS. (A Mobile Equipment plus an inserted SIM card and/or an UICC is called Mobile Station (MS) in GSM

and User Equipment (UE) in UMTS.) The invention also covers the storage media, e.g. SIM card or UICC, on which the SAT/USAT application(s) according to this invention reside.

[0008] The invention especially is directed - on the side of the telecommunication device or device ensemble - towards the method of controlling of MMS functionality residing on said device or device ensemble (claims 2 to 3) and for using MMS functionality as a bearer service in the download and/or upload direction (claims 4 to 11). The invention is also concerned with the respective methods on the side of network elements, as well as the respective devices and software programs.

[0009] SAT/USAT (SIM Application Toolkit / USIM Application Toolkit) is a toolkit which provides operators with API (Application Programming Interface) to put their own, operator-specific applications on a SIM or a UICC card taking into account the particularities of mobile phones - independent of the particular operator, smart card manufacturer and mobile phone manufacturer. For that purpose SAT/USAT provides a standardized execution environment for applications stored on the SIM/USIM card and the ability to utilize certain functions of the supporting Mobile Equipment (ME), i.e. the mobile phone. SAT/USAT provides mechanisms which allow applications, existing in the SIM/USIM, to interact and operate with any ME which supports the specified mechanism(s) thus ensuring interoperability between a SIM card/USIM and an ME, independent of the respective manufacturers and operators. The SIM card/UICC card is the physical basis for this toolkit since SIM card/UICC are owned by the operator and can thus most easily be adapted to the operator's needs. For a more detailed explanation of USAT, see 3GPP TS 31.111 V4.2.1 (Release 4), USIM Application Toolkit.

[0010] In a first preferred embodiment of the invention the at least one SAT/USAT application on the SIM card/UICC is configured such as to control the MMS functionality. According to the invention, the SAT or USAT mechanisms - in the following the abbreviation (U)SAT is often used - are extended for MMS, like allowing operator-specific USAT applications to perform checking, modifying, sending, downloading, displaying, etc. of an MM, parts of an MM, MMS notification, MMS delivery-report and MMS read-reply report. Using such (U)SAT mechanism(s) has the advantage that the operators can define their own (U)SAT functionalities for MMS (in addition to the features in 3GPP TS 31.111 V4.2.1) and are so able to have still some control about the used service on the terminal.

[0011] Accordingly, this first embodiment of the invention suggests that by means of above described methods an operator can put his own application on a SIM card/UICC which can use MMS functionality of the terminal via these SAT or USAT mechanisms. By passing the Multimedia Messages, the MMS notifications, the delivery reports and read-reply reports - preferably for both the sending and the receiving case - first to (U)SAT,

(U)SAT can check, modify, allow/disallow them (or their headers).

[0012] In a second preferred embodiment of the invention the Multimedia Messaging Service is used as a bearer, i.e. as a transport means for SAT or USAT applications. In this case, MMS is used as a transport mechanism for over-the-air data exchange of a remote entity, especially as an application server in the operator's network, and a Mobile Equipment. The advantage of this is to allow the operator to exchange any kind of data of any size with a remote entity.

[0013] Preferably, a new information element with the exemplary name "MMS bearer" is introduced. By checking this information element (U)SAT can determine if the MMS is used as a bearer service or as a normal messaging service.

[0014] Both described preferred embodiments have the advantage that the usage of the (U)SAT mechanisms is independent of the particular Mobile Equipment (i.e. mobile phone) the user uses at a certain point of time. The (U)SAT functionality is processed on the SIM card or the USIM on the UICC, which can be plugged into a Mobile Equipment or an apparatus connected with a terminal.

[0015] Moreover, the above (U)SAT mechanisms are independent of the particular operator or SIM card/UICC manufacturer. This means that third-party application developers can create applications based on these (U)SAT mechanisms which are platform-independent and can sell these applications to any operator and/or any SIM card/UICC manufacturer.

[0016] The invention will be discussed more thoroughly with respect to the drawings. The drawings show:

- Fig. 1 Controlling of sending a Multimedia Message by (U)SAT;
- Fig. 2 Controlling of receiving a Multimedia Message by (U)SAT;
- Fig. 3 MMS as a bearer service for USAT in case of terminal terminated MM, and
- Fig. 4 Transaction flow for using MMS as bearer service for USAT in case of terminal terminated MM.

[0017] In the following, two examples for the usage of MMS and (U)SAT are discussed. The first example concerns an (U)SAT controlling a terminal's MMS functionality, the second example concerns MMS as a bearer service for (U)SAT. In both cases it is assumed that the UICC (or SIM card) consists of a (U)SAT application and that this (U)SAT application is activated. In addition it is assumed that the terminal, into which the SIM card/UICC is plugged, owns an MMS User Agent, i.e. that MMS functionality is residing on the terminal.

1. (U)SAT controlling a terminal's MMS functionality:

[0018] The MMS User Agent (UA) is an application-layer functionality on a device which provides the users with the ability to view, compose and handle MMs, e.g. submitting, receiving, deleting of MMs. Beside this the MMS User Agent is able to receive MMS notifications and to present these notifications to the user in order to inform the user about MMs which are available for reception from the network. Via the MMS User Agent an MMS subscriber may also request, allow/disallow and display delivery reports and read-reply reports.

[0019] The invention proposes (U)SAT mechanisms to control and take care of handling the above described features of the MMS User Agent. When a Multimedia Message, headers of an MM, any other parts of an MM or read-reply reports are first passed to (U)SAT before sending the Multimedia Message, an (U)SAT application can check and modify the Multimedia Message and/or the Multimedia Message header and/or any other parts of the MM and can take care of allowing/disallowing the sending of Multimedia Messages, delivery reports and read-reply reports from the MMS User Agent.

[0020] When a Multimedia Message, headers of an MM, any other parts of an MM, notifications, delivery reports or read-reply reports are passed to (U)SAT immediately after they are received by the terminal (i.e. before these are rendered to the user or further processed and/or evaluated by the MMS User Agent) (U)SAT can check and modify these and can take care of receiving, downloading and displaying them.

[0021] In this example two different cases are described in more detail. The first case concerns the control of sending an MM by USAT. The second case concerns the control of receiving an MM by USAT.

1.a) Controlling of sending an MM by USAT:

[0022] A user has composed a Multimedia Message (MM) on his device, e.g. mobile phone. Before the ME (Mobile Equipment) sends the Multimedia Message (or parts of it) to the MMS Relay/Server, the ME passes the Multimedia Message first to USAT as shown in Fig. 1. The Multimedia Message header and the Multimedia Message content can be checked and if necessary modified (or sending can even be disallowed) by the operator-specific USAT application. After this, the Multimedia Message is passed back to the ME, which sends the modified or unmodified Multimedia Message to the MMS Relay/Server. This gives operators a means to control the sending of Multimedia Messages by putting an appropriate operator-specific USAT application on the UICC.

1.b) Controlling of receiving of an MM by USAT:

[0023] When the ME has received an MMS notification from the MMS Relay/Server, this notification is

passed first to USAT. Depending on the operator's definitions for MMS, the operator-specific USAT application can check, modify or even delete the MMS notification. After this the operator-specific USAT application may control which action is to be taken based on the MMS notification, e.g. it may trigger the MMS User Agent to immediately retrieve the notified MM from the Relay/Server. The notification can also be passed to the terminal for displaying it to the user or could be passed to the UICC for storage of the notification on the USIM. The latter two cases are schematically shown in Fig. 2. The above described mechanisms give operators a means to control the receiving of Multimedia Messages by putting an appropriate operator-specific USAT application on the UICC.

2. MMS as a bearer service for USAT:

[0024] As shown in Fig. 3 for the case of terminal terminated MM, MMS can be used as a transport mechanism for data exchange between a remote entity, e.g. a USAT application server in the operator network, and an operator-specific USAT application on the UICC via the MMS User Agent which resides on the terminal.

[0025] Using MMS as a bearer service for USAT (SAT) allows the operator to create his own USAT (SAT) applications residing on the UICC (SIM) which use the MMS User Agent on the terminal in order to exchange data over the air with remote entities. The user will not notice that MMS is used for these operator-specific applications; it all happens in the background.

[0026] However, the MMS User Agent on the device as well as the MMS Relay/Server in the network have to know that an MMS notification, a Multimedia Message (or parts of it), a delivery report and/or a read-reply report or other messages have to be passed on to a USAT (SAT) application. This can be done by putting an information element called e.g. "MMS bearer" in the header of the MMS notification, the Multimedia Message, the delivery report or the read-reply report. This information element can e.g. be a flag, which can be set ("1") or not set ("0").

2.a) Terminal terminated MM:

[0027] The information element can be used e.g. to download data from an USAT application server in the network to the USAT application in the UICC, as shown in Fig. 3. The operator's USAT application server in the network sends an MM with the aforementioned data as the MM's content to the MMS Relay/Server. As shown in the transaction flow diagram of Fig. 4, the MMS Relay/Server (MMS_RS) sends a notification MM1_NQ (*MM1_notification.REQ*) to the MMS User Agent (MMS_UA) to inform the MMS User Agent that a new Multimedia Message has arrived. The Mobile Station passes the notification first to USAT, before doing anything with it. USAT checks if the information element

"MMS bearer" is set or not. In this example this flag has been set because MMS is used as a bearer service for USAT. The MMS User Agent responds with an MM1_NR (*MM1_notification.RES*). After receiving the notification, the MMS User Agent can retrieve the MM, either immediately or at a later time, either manually or automatically, as possibly determined by the operator configuration and user profile.

[0028] In one preferred embodiment of the invention the message is retrieved immediately. The MMS User Agent will send a request MM1_RR for immediate retrieval of the Multimedia Message (*MM1_retrieve.REQ*) to the MMS Relay/Server. Finally, the MMS Relay/Server sends the Multimedia Message MM1_RR (*MM1_retrieve.RES*) down to the MMS User Agent which will immediately pass it on to USAT and the operator's USAT application. Here the MM is handled further, e.g. the aforementioned data are interpreted.

[0029] The MMS User Agent has to know that the MMS notification MM1_NQ (*MM1_notification.REQ*) and the Multimedia Message MM1_RR (*MM1_retrieve.RES*) both are used by USAT as bearer service and thus have to be passed on to USAT. Because of this the "MMS bearer" information element has to be conveyed in the message MM1_NQ (*MM1_notification.RES*) and in the message MM1_RR (*MM1_retrieve.RES*), see fig. 4.

2.b) Terminal originated MM:

[0030] In a similar manner the information element "MMS bearer" can be used e.g. to upload data from a USAT application in the UICC - which is plugged into a mobile phone - to a USAT application server in the network. The operator's USAT application in the UICC passes an MM with the aforementioned data as the MM's content to the MMS User Agent residing on the mobile phone or passes the aforementioned data to the MMS User Agent together with a command which makes the MMS User Agent compose an MM with this data as the MM's content (in this latter case the MMS-related message according to this invention is said command plus said data). Based on this the MM is submitted from the MMS User Agent to the MMS Relay/Server - carrying the information element "MMS bearer". Upon MM submission the USAT application in the UICC may also request a status information about the delivery and/or handling of the MM, i.e. it may request an MMS delivery report and/or an MMS read-reply report. Such a report would then be retrieved from either the MMS Relay/Server or the recipient of the MM which is the USAT application server in the network. These reports would also carry the information element "MMS bearer" in order to enable their routing back to the USAT application on the UICC.

[0031] Besides the methods described the present invention also relates to the respective devices or device ensembles, such as Mobile Stations (MS), User Equip-

ments (UE), and/or apparatuses connected to such devices (laptops, organizer, PC, etc), which are adapted to perform the inventive method steps. Especially, the User Agent residing on these devices and apparatuses have to be adapted for handling the MMS-related messages, especially to evaluate said information element. Other devices covered by the present invention are the storage media to be plugged into an ME, especially SIM cards and UICCs, which must be adapted to accommodate the respective SAT and/or USAT mechanisms according to this invention. The invention also comprises the network elements as (U)SAT application servers and MMS Relay/Servers. Also covered by the invention are the respective software programs for said processing and/or evaluating of said MMS-related messages as well as for the communication between the MMS Relay Server and the MMS User Agent and/or the Mobile Equipment, as well as between the MMS User Agent and the (U)SAT.

Claims

1. Method for processing and/or evaluating an MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service)-related message (Multimedia Message (MM), parts of an MM, delivery report, read-reply report, MMS notification, etc.) on a device or device ensemble adapted to participate in mobile telecommunication (Mobile Station (MS); User Equipment (UE); Mobile Equipment (ME); laptop, notebook, organizer, PC, etc. connected to an MS, UE, ME, etc.), said device or device ensemble accommodating an MMS User Agent and accommodating or adapted to accommodate at least one SIM card (Subscriber Identity Module) and/or one UICC (Universal Integrated Circuit Card) with an USIM (UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunication Service)-SIM), wherein said MMS-related message is terminal originated or terminal terminated,
characterized in that
said MMS-related message is processed and/or evaluated by at least one SAT/USAT application (SIM Application Toolkit / USIM Application Toolkit) residing on said SIM card/UICC.
2. Method according to claim 1,
characterized in that
said processing and/or evaluation comprises controlling at least partly the MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) functionality on said device or device ensemble.
3. Method according to claim 2,
characterized in that
said controlling by said at least one SAT/USAT application comprises at least one of the following actions:
 - Checking of outgoing and/or incoming Multimedia Messages (MMs), MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports;
 - Modifying outgoing and/or incoming MMs, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports;
 - Deleting of MMs, MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports;
 - Initiating the sending of MMs, MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports from said device or device ensemble;
 - Initiating the download of MMs, MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports to said device or device ensemble;
 - Initiating the storage of MMs, MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports on the SIM or USIM on said UICC.
 - Allowing/disallowing the sending of MMs, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports;
 - Initiating the display of MMs, MMS notifications, delivery reports and/or read-reply reports on said device or device ensemble.
4. Method according to any one of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
said MMS-related message (MM, parts of an MM, delivery report, read-reply report, MMS notification, etc.) is received by said device or said device ensemble from a network element (MMS Relay/Server) and passed on by said MMS User Agent to said at least one SAT/USAT application for processing and/or evaluating said MMS-related message, wherein MMS is used as a bearer service for SAT/USAT.
5. Method according to claim 4,
characterized in that
said MMS User Agent passes on said MMS-related message from said MMS Relay/Server (MM, parts of an MM, delivery report, read-reply report, MMS notification, etc.) to said SAT/USAT after positive checking, whether MMS is used as a bearer service.
6. Method according to claim 4 or 5,
characterized in that
said MMS User Agent sends a request to said network element (MMS Relay/Server) for immediate retrieval of the MM when being informed by said SAT/USAT application that MMS is used as a bearer service.
7. Method according to any one of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
said SAT/USAT application uses MMS as a bearer service for uploading data via said MMS User Agent and said MMS Relay/Server to a network element (USAT application server).

8. Method according to claim 7,
characterized in that
said SAT/USAT application passes an MM with said data as said MM's content to said MMS User Agent or passes said data to the MMS User Agent together with a command for the MMS User Agent to compose an MM with said data as said MM's content, and that said MM is then submitted from the MMS User Agent to said MMS Relay/Server.
9. Method according to claim 7 or 8,
characterized in that
said SAT/USAT application requests a status information about the delivery and/or handling of said MM (delivery report, read-reply report) to be retrieved from either said MMS Relay Server or said network element (USAT application server).
10. Method according to any one of claims 4 to 9,
characterized in that
said MMS User Agent and/or said SAT/USAT application and/or said network element USAT application server identifies those MMS-related messages (MM, parts of an MM, delivery report, read-reply report, MMS notification, etc.), for which MMS is used as a bearer service, by an information element ("MMS bearer") in a header of said message (MM, parts of an MM, delivery report, read-reply report, MMS notification, etc.).
11. Method according to claim 10,
characterized in that
a flag is used as said information element in said header.
12. Method for passing down an MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service)-related message from a network element supporting MMS handling (SAT/USAT application server, MMS Relay Server) to a device or device ensemble adapted to participate in telecommunication (Mobile Station (MS); User Equipment (UE); Mobile Equipment (ME); laptop, notebook, organizer, PC, etc. connected to a MS, UE, etc.), said device or device ensemble accommodating an MMS User Agent and accommodating or adapted to accommodate at least one SIM card (Subscriber Identity Module) and/or one UICC (Universal Integrated Circuit Card),
characterized in that
said network element (SAT/USAT application server, MMS Relay Server) uses MMS as a bearer service for transferring said MMS-related message to said device or device ensemble.
13. Method according to claim 12,
characterized in that
a header of said MMS-related message contains an information element indicating the usage of MMS as a bearer service.
14. Method according to claim 12 or 13,
characterized in that
said network element is an MMS Relay/Server which passes down said MMS-related message to said MMS User Agent on said device or device ensemble.
15. Method according to claim 12 or 13,
characterized in that
said network element is a SAT/USAT application server which uses MMS as a bearer service for transferring data in form of a said MMS-related message via an MMS Relay Server to said SAT/USAT application.
16. Device or device ensemble adapted to participate in mobile telecommunication (Mobile Station (MS); User Equipment (UE); Mobile Equipment (ME); laptop, notebook, organizer, PC, etc. connected to a MS, UE, ME, etc.), especially to perform or to support the method steps of any one of the claims 1 to 11, said device or device ensemble accommodating an MMS User Agent and accommodating or adapted to accommodate at least one SIM card (Subscriber Identity Module) and/or one UICC (Universal Integrated Circuit Card) with a USIM (UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunication Service) -SIM),
characterized in that
said device or device ensemble is adapted to support at least one SAT/USAT application residing on said SIM card/UICC, wherein said at least one SAT/USAT application processes and/or evaluates terminal originated or terminal terminated MMS-related messages (Multimedia Messages (MMs), parts of MMs, delivery reports, read-reply reports, MMS notification, etc.) for controlling and/or making use of MMS functionality residing on said device or device ensemble, especially according to any of claims 1 to 11.
17. Device or device ensemble according to claim 16,
characterized in that
it is a Mobile Station (MS), an User Equipment (UE), an Mobile Equipment (ME) and/or a device connected to such a telecommunication device (laptop, notebook, organizer, PC, etc.).
18. Network element (SAT/USAT application server; MMS Relay Server) to perform the method steps of any one of the claims 12 to 15.
19. Storage medium (SIM card; UICC) for accommodating at least one SAT/USAT application, wherein said storage medium is adapted to be plugged into a telecommunication device, especially a device or

a device ensemble according to claim 16 or 17, wherein said at least one SAT/USAT application processes and/or evaluates terminal originated or terminal ended MMS-related messages (Multimedia Message (MM), parts of MM, delivery reports, read-reply reports, MMS notification, etc.) for controlling and/or making use of MMS functionality residing on said device or device ensemble. 5

20. A software program comprising program code means wherein said software program may be run on an device or a device ensemble, especially according to any one of claims 16 to 18, such that said software program together with said device performs the steps of any one of the claims 1 to 15. 10 15

21. A software program comprising program code means which is laudable on a device or a device ensemble, especially according to any one of claims 16 to 18, such that said programmed device or device ensemble is adapted to perform the steps of any one of the claims 1 to 15. 20

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FIG 1

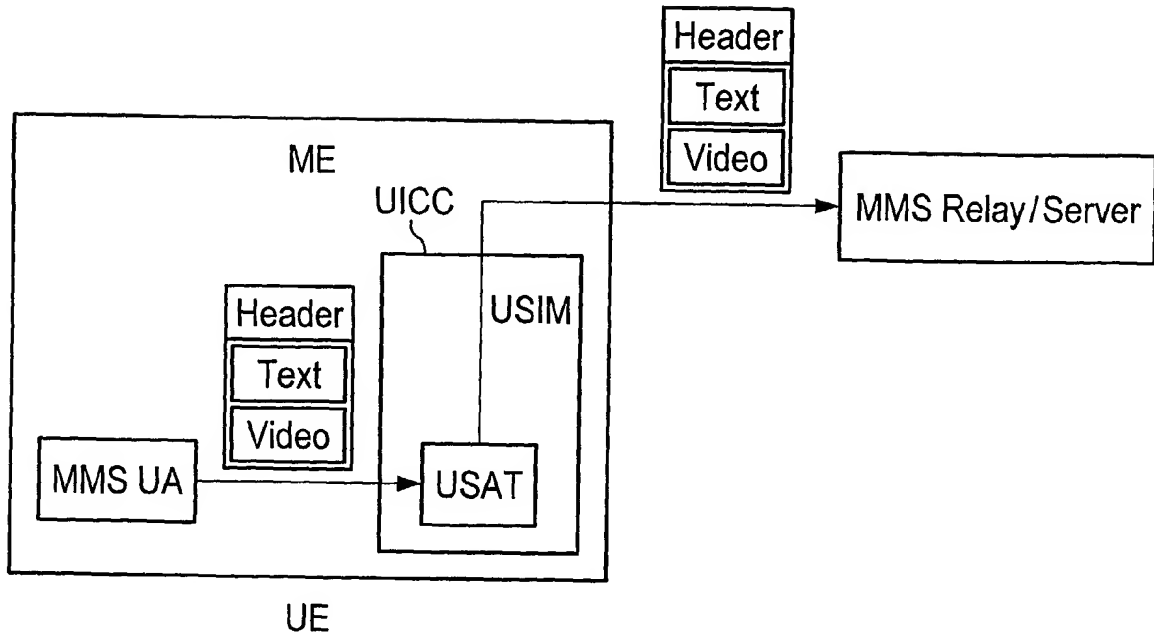


FIG 2

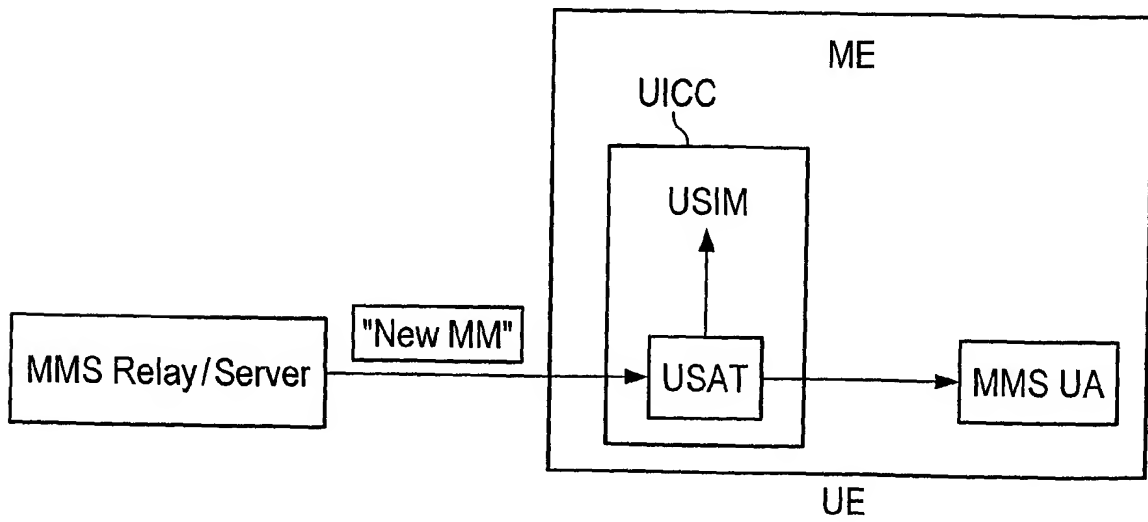


FIG 3

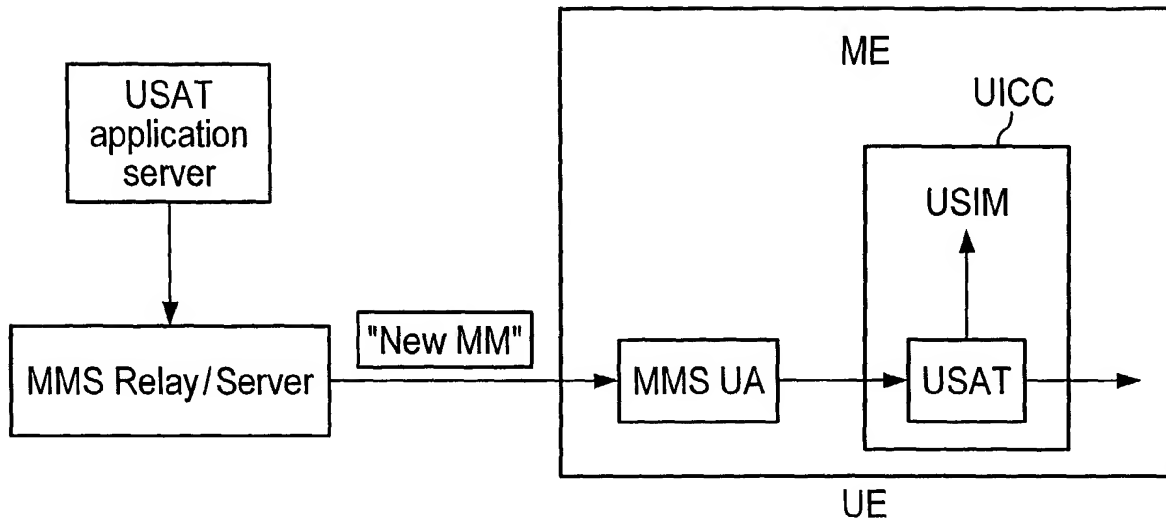
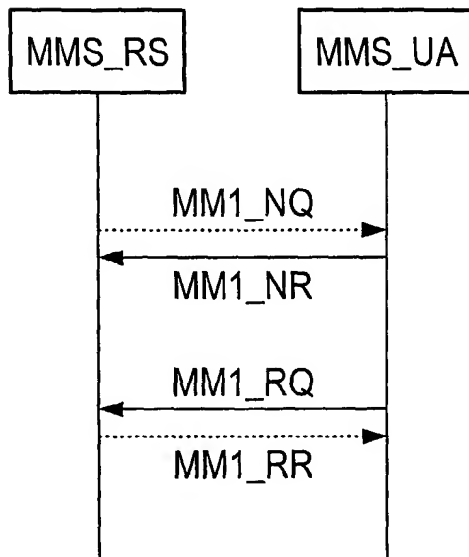


FIG 4



With:

MMS_RS: MMS Relay/Server

MMS_UA: MMS User Agent

MM1_NQ: MM1_notification.REQ

MM1_NR: MM1_notification.RES

MM1_RQ: MM1_retrieve.REQ

MM1_RR: MM1_retrieve.RES

-----> Message containing "MMS bearer" information element



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 11 5522

| DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Category | Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages | Relevant to claim | CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7) |
| A | EP 1 063 858 A (KONINKL KPN NV) 27 December 2000 (2000-12-27) * column 1, line 52 - column 2, line 53 * | 1,12,16, 18-21 | H04Q7/22 |
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| Place of search THE HAGUE | | Date of completion of the search 18 October 2001 | Examiner Gkeli, M |
| CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document | | T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document | |

EPO FORM 1503 03/02 (P04001)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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